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THE CHALLENGE OF PEACE TO THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY OF THE CHURCH

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Although some of our readers may feel that it is impossible for the question treated in the following article to be settled satisfactorily at present, we feel that so sane a discussion as this one should be given a hearing. In the process of thinking the matter through many voices must be heard, and each one which stimulates interest in and reflection upon so vital a subject is of importance.

In using this title I take the word "peace" as a euphemism for the present condition of the world. There is considerably less war in the world today than a year ago, and the hope of peace is much brighter, but if by peace we mean a general condition of humanity in which people are busy in productive labor, reasonably contented and prosperous, and not spending a large part of their energy in merely struggling against others, then we are yet some months, and very likely years, from a condition of peace. And this condition, I judge, constitutes the main element in the challenge of the present time—this condition and those phases of it which threaten permanent and perhaps greater disturbances in the future, if no remedy for existing evils is found.

The Outstanding Conflicts of Yesterday and Today

Two principal sources of unrest and struggle have shown themselves very plainly in the most recent years and are probably more clearly recognized as fundamental problems today than ever before.

1. The first may be called the problem of aristocracy, if that term be taken broadly enough. There is, on the one hand, the effort of individuals, groups, classes, nations, and races to gain, increase, or maintain power over the destinies of other groups, industrial, social, religious, national, or racial, without the consent of the latter, and, on the other hand, a resistance to such domination, which is increasing in power and violence. We have heard, perhaps sufficiently, of the Kaiser's autocracy and the determination of the Junkers of Germany to rule not only Germany but the world, doubtless for the good of Germany and the world, but still without the consent of the parties to be ruled. It may be doubted whether there is any country on earth without a considerable class of the same sort of people. In much of Europe a titled aristocracy still survives, as also in British colonies in America and other parts of the world. Where there is no titled aristocracy the autocracy is likely to be one of wealth or position of some sort. Quite apart from the economic problem, which is the other compartment in the

Pandora's box of today, the person who has considerably more wealth than the average is very likely to think that he is really superior to others and has a divine right to rule them and to use the power of his wealth to secure or maintain a certain degree of such rule. Persons elected to public office, whether alderman, mayor, governor, or president, are in danger of the same aristocratic spirit, and officials of all sorts have a strong tendency to seek and exercise it, whether railroad presidents, university presidents, bishops, or political bosses. The average employer still has the feeling that if he furnishes the capital to run the business he has an ultimate and exclusive cosmic right to say just how it shall be run, at least as far as those who work for him are concerned.

We have spoken particularly of autocrats and aristocrats within national groups. The same spirit is manifested between nations. Few large nations are without more or less contempt for all other nations, regarding civilizations which differ from their own as therefore inferior, and this assumption of superiority on the part of the German nation, which has been so prominent in recent utterances of its leaders in every line of activity, has doubtless been one of the principal causes of the world-conflagration, the smoking ruins from which we are beginning to try to clear away.

When the distinctions become racial and are marked by bodily appearance and especially by color of skin the assumption of superiority and effort to realize it are likely to become most prominent and bitter. All European

nations with African colonies have assumed their superiority and right to rule the Africans and have generally looked down on Asiatics, particularly those from the Far East. It will hardly be necessary to mention the attitude of the white man in *this* country toward the black or the brown man.

2. The second evident source of disturbance and conflict throughout the world is that of economic conditions. The United States income tax returns for the years 1914-17 afford food for thought. Seven thousand five hundred and eight persons or families reported an income of \$50,000 or more for the year 1914; 19,104 persons reported an income of \$50,000 or more for the year 1917. But only about 4½ per cent of the men of the United States reported an income of \$2,500 or more. I have good authority for the estimate that 95 per cent of the wealth of the country is in the hands of 5 per cent of the population, that is, of the families. There is evident the determination on the part of many to get and keep for themselves as great a portion of wealth as it is possible to get, *without any limit*—at the expense, of course, of others, no matter how great their need or what their deserts. And the possession of considerable wealth gives to such persons great power to increase their wealth still further at the expense of the poorer classes. I need not refer to the manifestations of discontent with this situation, as they are world-wide, ubiquitous, and ominous. Bolshevism has come to be a name for the extreme reaction of the oppressed classes to both aristocracy and plutocracy, and it is to be noted that Bolshevism does not solve either of these problems, but merely

presents them in unusual forms. The classes which have hitherto been the lowest, and poorest, endeavor to dominate or destroy those which have been regarded as superior and have possessed more wealth.

The challenge of the present situation—of “peace” if you would find that name appropriate for this situation—is most evidently the challenge of these two problems, the social and the economic, or the problems of aristocracy and plutocracy. Has the church anything to do with these problems? Has it an educational policy with regard to them? If so, is the policy adequate to the need?

Religion and World-Problems

Religion is man's effort to gain life by contact and co-operation with the ultimate powers of the universe. The Christianity of some centuries past has until the most recent years laid the principal emphasis upon the future life—the life after death. For reasons which it is unnecessary to enumerate here, that emphasis has rapidly been changing during the last generation. But whether that be the fact and be recognized to be the fact or not, it is important that we should see that these two world-problems are religious problems. In the first place, the content of these two problems—the stuff with which they are concerned—is the principal objective content of life—this earthly life—and problems of morals and of character are for the most part problems of the ways in which men shall act in their social, political, and economic relationships. In the second place, the *attitudes* which one takes with regard to

these problems are the fundamental attitudes of life; they represent one's view of the real nature of the universe in so far as it concerns human life. If I seek for fulness of life in any earthly sense I must seek for some degree of wealth, that is, money or material possession, and for some rank and position among my fellows. What, how much, and how I shall seek must be determined for me by my world-view, or make up my world-view—they are the fundamental matters of my philosophy and religion. The universe will give me success if I seek certain things in certain ways. My definition of success and method of seeking it are then my real religion, creed, and practice. And if I try to secure any co-operation with higher powers—with God—by prayer or sacrifice, it will be largely in the attainment of wealth or position for myself or my friends, or in matters closely related to these interests.

Now Christianity has had from the beginning a definite historical attitude as to the principle on which these problems are to be solved. This attitude is entirely involved in its faith in the fatherhood of God, which, stated more fully, means faith that the ultimate force in the universe is not less than personal, and that it desires and contrives for the fullest development and highest welfare of all humanity. This implies further that obedience to, or harmony and co-operation with, this ultimate force would require any man to seek the fullest development and highest welfare of all other men, and that one's own highest good is not merely consistent with, but dependent upon, efforts to promote the highest welfare of all others. The

"brotherhood of man" is an immediate and necessary implication of the "fatherhood of God."

Can this implication be considered mutual, or is it possible to hold a real religious faith in the brotherhood of man, as undoubtedly many are inclined to do today, without any faith in the fatherhood of God? For our present purpose I believe that we can say positively that the brotherhood of man implies something equivalent to the fatherhood of God; that is, faith in the brotherhood of man means faith that each man will attain his highest good, the largest measure of life, by methods which are promotive of the highest welfare of all; that humanity is therefore constituted by a power which is benevolent toward every member of it, whether that power be thought of as prior to and transcending humanity or as merely immanent in humanity. Faith in the brotherhood of man is therefore per se faith in a universe which, at least as far as men in their mutual relations are concerned, is built on the principle of mutual love and co-operation. I fear that there are very few as yet who realize this implication of the brotherhood of man, and I believe that it is likely to become a far more effective religious faith as this is more generally recognized.

It would seem almost self-evident that if the doctrine of the brotherhood of man were practically and universally applied to human relations all fundamental conflicts between men, such as we have seen to face this age, would disappear, and the problems involved in the present existence of aristocracy and plutocracy would be solved. If this

be true, and if Christianity has this doctrine as one of its basic principles, then Christianity has something with which to meet the challenge of the present day and meet it effectively. An educational policy for the adequate application of this theory of life to humanity's needs would seem to involve two elements: (1) definition in plain terms of the specific meaning of the brotherhood of man as applied to the fundamental problems of today; (2) a policy as to means and methods of educating humanity in the religious faith and practice of human brotherhood in these specific applications.

What is the policy of the church as to the clear definition and the mode of propagating this doctrine of salvation of the world from its present strife and threatened chaos? Alas, I know of no policy of the Christian church generally, or of any considerable portion of the Christian church, with regard to these matters. I love the church. I have little sympathy with wholesale criticism and denunciation of the church such as is rather popular nowadays. I believe that the blessings that have come and are now coming to humanity through the church are immense. But I consider the lack of a definite educational policy such as the present day requires simply frightful and inexcusable. In the hope of contributing a little to the adoption of a proper educational policy I would like to offer some suggestions as to what it should be and how it should be propagated.

The Social Gospel of the Church

The truths which the church must teach to present humanity in order to

prepare for better future humanity will begin with the doctrine of God in Christ—the manifestation of the ultimate power of the universe in the life of loving service of the Son of Man and of every normal man. This doctrine is as old as Christianity, but its implications have not been recognized and taught. Nevertheless it has clear implications with regard to both aristocracy and plutocracy, if only we would be honest and brave enough to search for and declare them.

I suggest the following as clear corollaries of the doctrine of God in Christ, as applied to the problems arising from aristocracy:

1. There should be no hereditary titles or social distinctions, no hereditary kaiser or king, duke or earl, no blue-blood or F.F.V., on the basis of heredity only. There should therefore be no assumption of superiority by a person because he was born in a particular spot on the earth or because he has a certain color of skin. *All* men should be honored and respected as *children of God*, and distinctions between them of title, honor, or social position should be only such as are earned by service to humanity; no other distinctions should be recognized either by law or by custom.

2. Real or fancied superiority of individual, class, nation, or race gives no right to impose the will of the individual or group on any other individual, class, nation, or race against the will of the latter, supposedly inferior, person or group, except to the extent of the barest self-protection, and the maintenance of such conditions of order as shall be necessary for free development and for

the protection of some groups from other groups, whether such imposition be intended as benevolent or selfish. If I have a good thing, whether in the way of religion or government or other element of culture, let me not force it upon any other man. If I can prove that it is good and offer it to him he will take it gladly, and it will be of real good to him. If I attempt to force it upon him my motives immediately come under suspicion, and the value of what I offer also. It may thus easily become a curse instead of a blessing. What damnable deeds and disgraceful chapters of the history of the relation of white men to American Indians, Asiatics, and Africans would have been precluded if this principle had been taught and practiced!

3. Every man of every race should have the largest opportunities which the best-organized society can provide, for education—self-development—and for sharing in all the tasks and joys which are open to *any* man, according to his own will and nature.

As implications of the doctrine of God in Christ, when applied to the problems arising from *plutocracy*, I suggest the following:

1. *Every man* who is *willing* to do his share of the work of the world should be provided with food, clothes, shelter, and the other necessities of a decent and satisfactory life for himself *and his family* before *any* man is allowed to retain possession of much more than enough for such a decent and satisfactory life. This means that society should be so organized that a man who is *willing* to work should *have* work to do, and that his remuneration for his

work should be not less than a reasonable minimum for the proper care of a family. Society is at present organized in many cases to prevent people who desire to work from doing for others that which the others need to have done for them. That situation can and must be reversed, and the old law of supply and demand, which economists have for some generations worshiped as the supreme principle of the economic universe, must be deposed and made to serve rather than to rule mankind, just as the winds and waves and other forces of nature have been conquered.

2. As there should be a minimum of wealth guaranteed to every orderly member of society so there should also be a *maximum* of wealth which the state should allow no one to exceed except as the minimum is correspondingly raised. To divide wealth equally among all men would be futile and foolish. To see that each man has enough for healthful living is certainly desirable and probably entirely practicable. To see that no man has wealth far exceeding his normal needs while others might be far more benefited by it than he is will seem a revolutionary principle to a great many and will be denounced as socialism, Bolshevism, anarchism, communism, robbery, and what not, but it has already to a certain extent been recognized in the income taxes levied by our own and other governments during the war. There is no good reason why the same principle should not be applied, and more thoroughly, in our so-called times of peace, and its application would do much to hasten the time of *real* peace. The reason for this principle is not merely that society is bound to make

proper provision for each of its members in so far as its total wealth makes this possible, but that the possession of great wealth makes any person a potential autocrat—furnishing him with a mighty power which may be used, as it is constantly being used, *contrary* to the welfare of society in general. To make concrete and clear what I have in mind let me say that I think a million dollars, or an income of \$50,000 per year, is enough for any man to be trusted to use according to his own private will, no matter how good that will is. The state might well take by taxes any surplus beyond that and use it for the common good in roads, schools, libraries, health preservation, etc. If all were treated alike no millionaire would be much to be pitied or have much to complain of that he were not permitted to amass a billion or more.

3. Every employed person should have some voice in the management and some share in the profits of the business in which he is employed, whether it be street cleaning, or automobile making, or teaching in school or university. What that share should be must be determined by experiment, but for the interests of all concerned it should be a real share.

I make no claim to be an expert economist or sociologist. If any of the principles I have suggested above can be shown to be contrary to the highest welfare of humanity I shall abandon them with no regret. But if, as it seems to me, they are glaringly evident principles of human welfare and therefore necessary applications of the Brotherhood of Man, then surely the church must adopt them and see that they are taught. Do they seem improper

subjects for religious instruction? How about the Ten Commandments? Are they religious? But at least seven of them, if they have any meaning for us today, are simple rules for the guarding and promotion of human welfare, and to my mind the fundamental principles which they involve would imply all that I have indicated as necessary social and economic doctrines. If that is true does not the present world-situation challenge the church to adopt them and teach them at least to the children and youth, so that another generation will accept them as its program for the reorganization of society? Will the church accept this challenge?

Teaching the Doctrine

Suppose the church—or churches generally, since there is at present no unity of organization in the Christian church—should accept these principles as Christian and vital, how should it effectively teach them and their pre-suppositions and applications to society?

The church has at present two principal opportunities for instructing its constituency, the sermon and the Sunday school. Both may and should be used for the purposes we have before us. But the main purpose of the sermon is not instruction, and the facts that the attendance is irregular and partial, and that recitation, question, and discussion on the part of the learners are practically excluded, make the sermon a very inadequate instrument for such education as society requires in these respects.

The Sunday school does not suffer from all of these disadvantages, but it

has three limitations which make it altogether incompetent to meet the need: First, it reaches only a fraction, often a *small* fraction, of those who ought to be instructed, and their attendance, being purely voluntary (on the part of the pupils or their parents), is irregular. Second, the time, from twenty minutes to at the most an hour once a week, given to study and instruction is entirely insufficient. Third, the teachers are largely untrained and relatively incompetent volunteers. If society depended upon such facilities for the *general* education of its members the results would be infinitely worse than they are, and that is bad enough. The actual agencies which society has and uses in this country for the education of children and youth are the public primary, grammar, and high schools and the public and private colleges and universities. These should all be used directly or indirectly for the teaching of the church.

In every school district provision should be made by the churches, jointly and severally, for the religious instruction of all the pupils whose parents consent, during two or more of the regular school hours of each week, by expert teachers—the pastors of the churches or others at least as competent. The pupils should be sent to the teacher of their own or their parents' choice, whether in the church buildings or other suitable places, and their attendance should be carefully checked and their work tested and credited. Any pupils who do not go to such classes should be kept in school and given such work as should be at least as exacting of effort as the church classes, and if

possible such as would to some extent take their place.

Such a method is already being used in parts of this country, being, for example, one of the features of the famous "Gary system" in Indiana, and it is an old and familiar one in other parts of the world. In any community where the churches should unite to demand the co-operation of the public-school authorities and prepare to put this system into practice they could establish it.

In colleges and universities under *private* control and Christian influence courses in religion and its applications

to the social, economic, and other fundamental problems of life should be given by competent professors and required of all students. In state institutions such courses should be given as electives. In schools of higher education the principles of sociology and political economy which I have advocated could readily be and to some extent are now being taught in courses in social and economic science. But it is essential that in all such schools the fundamental principles of Christianity, historical and philosophical, should be *effectively* taught and their direct social applications indicated.

CHRISTIAN AND JEW AT THE FRONT

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To those of us who have had the privilege of serving with the United States Army abroad, religious unity, co-operation between denominations, is more than a far-off ideal. We know under what circumstances and to what extent it is feasible, and just how it deepens and broadens the religious spirit in both chaplain and soldier. We have passed beyond the mutual tolerance of the older liberalism to the mutual helpfulness of the newer devoutness. Our common ground is no longer the irreducible minimum of doctrine which we share; it is the practical maximum of service which we can render together. Perhaps I was in a critical position to experience this, as

the only Jewish chaplain in the Twenty-seventh Division; my duty was to minister to the men of Jewish faith throughout the various units of our division, with the friendly co-operation of the twenty other chaplains of various faiths. And I was able to do my work among the Jews, and to a certain extent among the Christians also, simply because these Protestant and Catholic chaplains were equally friendly and helpful to me and my scattered flock. Not by mutual tolerance but by mutual helpfulness we were able to serve together the thousands of soldiers who needed us all.

It is a commonplace that as men grow acquainted they naturally learn